TASK FORCE RUSSIA -- TRIWEEKLY REPORT 11 SEPTEMBER-8 OCTOBER 1993

THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE 2400 DEFENSE PENTAGON WASHINGTON, DC 20301-2400

REGIONAL SECURITY AFFAIRS

MEMORANDUM FOR AMBASSADOR MALCOLM TOON AND COMMISSION MEMBERS

SUBJECT: Triweekly Report, 11 September - 8 October 1993

The attached report focuses on Vietnam- and Korean-War-related interviews conducted in Moscow and Kiev. The issue of Cold War shootdowns was pursued through telephonic interviews with Messrs. Roland Robitaille and Bob - Owings, who participated in the search-and-rescue mission for the RB-29 shot down by the Soviets on 13 June 1952.

Working with the Joint Commission Support Branch and Task Force Russia, we are identifying agenda items for the December plenum and working group sessions in Moscow and are selecting possible locations for the Commission to visit as part of its itinerary.

Norman D. Kass Executive Secretary U.S.-Russia Joint Commission on POW/MIAs

DEFENSE PRISONER OF WAR/MISSING IN ACTION OFFICE 2400 DEFENSE PENTAGON WASHINGTON, DC 20301-2400

21 October 1993

MEMORANDUM FOR AMBASSADOR MALCOLM TOON AND COMMISSIONERS, U.S.-RUSSIA JOINT COMMISSION ON POW/MIAS (USRJC)

SUBJECT: Report on Significant Activities of the USRJC, 11 September through 8 October 1993

SUMMARY: Highlights of this reporting period, which follows the August/September Plenary Session in Moscow focus on interviews conducted in Kiev and Moscow. Given recent political developments in Russia, travel was limited, and relatively few interviews were conducted during this period. End of summary.

UNIQUE POLITICAL CLIMATE: The last several weeks have been a tumultuous period in Russia - President Yeltsin disbanded Parliament, then Vice President Alexander Rutskoy, Parliamentary Speaker Ruslan Khasbulatov, and some conservative members of Parliament barricaded themselves in the White House. Next, the embattled Parliamentarians encouraged crowds to attack the Kremlin, and finally, a bloody fight for the White House ensued. Yet, throughout all this turmoil, Task Force Russia in Moscow has continued to function and to conduct interviews with Russian citizens, albeit on a limited basis. While many Americans sought refuge in the American Embassy, located only a few blocks from the fighting, members of Task Force Russia stayed in their hotel rooms and apartments throughout the turbulence. Fortunately, no one from TFR was injured in the fighting.

VIETNAM WAR:

Interview of General Nikolai Sergeyevich Leonov: Leonov, a retired KGB officer, was interviewed by TFR personnel on 8 September 1993. The Russian side chose not to send a representative to the interview. Leonov served in the KGB from 1958 to 1991. Much of this time was served abroad. At one time he headed the Analytical Department for the External Affairs Section. When asked if he had any knowledge of American POWs being taken from Vietnam to the Soviet Union, he replied that he could see no reason to bring POWs to the Soviet Union. He stated further that this would have been a HUMINT issue and his department did not deal with such matters.

Leonov is aware of only one assessment of Vietnam ever requested by the Soviet Communist Party's Politburo--a feasibility study of an American airborne operation to cut North Vietnam in two. They examined this issue and reached the conclusion that it was both politically and militarily infeasible for the United States to conduct an airborne operation of such magnitude.

Earlier reports received by TFR linked General Leonov with KGB operations in Indochina. However, General Leonov's denial of any knowledge about American POWs in Vietnam as well as his career progression seem to indicate that he indeed had no knowledge of POWs. No follow up is required.

Interview of Vladimir Vladimirovich Dorofeyev: In a related issue, TFR renewed its contact with Vladimir Dorofeyev, who is a prominent figure in the Obelisk Search Group, a group established to look for survivors of the purges/gulag. Dorofeyev assisted members of TFR by setting up a visit to the War Museum in Kiev where some Vietnam-era captured equipment was photographed. These photographs will be examined for clues to missing or unaccounted-for U.S. personnel.

Mr. Dorofeyev also recounted the story of Irina Borisovna Alpatyeva who lives in Sevastopol'. Because her father is alleged to have knowledge of American POWs, one of Dorofeyev's friends tried to contact her in hopes that she could lead him to her father. However, shortly after he made contact with Irina Alpatyeva, the friend was visited by the "special services" and told not to concern himself with the issue of American POWs. Subsequent attempts to meet with Alpatyeva were rebuffed.

TFR intends to raise this issue with the Russian side of the Commission. Furthermore, the U.S. side will ask the Russians for more assistance in overcoming such obstacles to our investigations.

KOREAN WAR:

Re-Interview of retired MVD Colonel Vladimir Markonch Malinin: Colonel Malinin was re-interviewed on 24 September by TFR personnel in his home outside of St. Petersburg. He reiterated the fact that the person he identified in the photos resembled the individual he had seen at Magadan. The photo he keyed on (age-enhanced) was that of a person that may have been Philip Mandra. COL Malinin basically repeated the salient points of the first interview. [For first Malinin interview, see Report on Significant Activities of the USRJC, 21 August through 10 September 1993, pp. 3-4.]

As a result of press coverage of the first interview, Irene Mandra, sister to Philip Mandra, plans to travel to Moscow on 29 November to meet with General Volkogonov and to visit selected psychiatric hospitals, where she believes her brother is still alive.

General Volkogonov has given his personal assurance of full cooperation in resolving the Mandra case. On 7 October, TFR sent a letter to LTC Osipov with four requests: for assistance in locating two individuals named by Malinin as possessing information about the Magadan prison; determining the name and business address of the principal newspaper in the Magadan region to publicize an appeal for information for an American prisoner with the general appearance of Mandra; the name and subordination of a Magadan prison for "special category" prisoners; and location of psychiatric hospital or psychiatric ward of a regular hospital subordinate to any agency in 1979, as well as records/death certificates of patients who passed away while in these facilities. We intend to follow up on these questions during the upcoming December plenary.

Interview of Colonel Grigoriy Pavlovich Derskiy: In Kiev on 17 September 1993, members of Task Force Russia interviewed a retired Soviet Army colonel named Grigoriy Pavlovich Derskiy. In the course of the first interview, held in Colonel Derskiy's apartment, the colonel related how, during the Korean War, he was ordered to send one American POW to the Soviet Union via China. It should also be noted, however, that while Colonel Derskiy may have participated directly in sending one American to the Soviet Union, his participation in sending others is thought to be indirect.

Just prior to the outbreak of the Korean War, Colonel Derskiy was assigned as an advisor to the North Korean 4th Infantry Division. In the first interview, he said that he believed that during this period, GRU

[Soviet Military Intelligence] headquarters ordered Soviet forces in Korea to obtain, at any cost, an intact F-84 aircraft and to immediately transport it to Moscow.

In April 1951, according to Colonel Derskiy, an F-84, which had run out of fuel, crashed in a rice paddy in North Korea. Because there was no fuel on the aircraft, it did not bum, and the aircraft survived largely intact. Moreover, the pilot survived. Shortly thereafter, a Soviet technology exploitation team arrived on the scene and removed the aircraft. Meanwhile, Colonel Derskiy claims, he received the order to prepare the American pilot for transportation to China and then for further travel to the Soviet Union. The pilot was first sent to the city of Sen Goo Syun and then on to Moscow.

Shortly after Colonel Derskiy's interview, DPMO ran a check of Air Force Korean War records. It was found that an F-84 was indeed shot down in April 1951 and that its pilot, Captain John L. Helton, is carried as MIA.

The colonel suggested TFR meet with a number of his friends and colleagues who could possibly provide additional information on American POWs taken to the former Soviet Union. TFR will, of course, follow through on the colonel's suggestion to meet with these individuals. It is hoped they will provide additional insight into the fate of any Americans who may have been taken to the former Soviet Union. Results from further interviews will be published as received.

Interview of Aleksandr Giorgievich Dmitriev: On 17 September 1993, members of Task Force Russia, together with a Russian representative, interviewed Aleksandr Giorgievich Dmitriev. He is a Russian citizen who has taken a special interest in the fate of American POW/MIAs in Russia. Aleksandr Dmitriev has already conducted substantial research in Russian archives. While working in the Russian State Military Archive in Moscow, he claims to have found information indicating that the MVD's 22nd Independent Battalion later renamed the 82nd Independent Battalion] was charged with escorting American POWs to the former Soviet Union during the Korean War.

Pointing to an order to the 22nd Independent Battalion dated 8 April 1952 that contains the phrase "be prepared for a special cargo", Dmitriev suggests that this meant to strengthen the guard for a "special cargo", i.e. POWs. When he tried to follow up information on the 22nd Independent Battalion, the archivist in the archives special reading room informed Dmitriev that the material was dosed to the public because it contained derogatory information of a personal nature.

TFR intends to check the accuracy of this "special cargo" statement. Meanwhile, Mr. Dmitriev informed Task Force Russia that he intends to visit archives in Siberia and elsewhere in Russia in search of additional information on possible American POWs. Any material that Dmitriev might uncover relative POW/MIA issues will be appreciated, but at the same time, will be double-checked for accuracy.

COLD WAR:

Interview of Roland Robitaille and Bob Owings: On 27 September 1993, members of the JCSB interviewed Robitaille and Owings by telephone. Both men were crewmen on a B-29 that participated in a search and rescue mission for the RB-29 shot down by the Soviets on 13 June 1952. While on the search mission, they both saw the RB-29 floating in the water in the Sea of Japan. They did not see any survivors or life rafts. Robitaille and Owings alerted the pilot of their own plane. The pilot, however, misunderstood the radio communications and flew on for another thirty minutes before he understood what Robitaille and Owings wanted. He subsequently turned back, then turned to make another pass over the downed B-29, but they could not find the aircraft again.

When they returned to base, only the officers were debriefed, but none of them said anything about the sighting. Consequently, the sighting by the enlisted crew members went unreported until this telephone conversation. Still, both men are convinced that they saw the RB-29 floating in the water. While this does not mean there are any survivors of the RB-29 crash, the fact that the aircraft did not break up on impact may indicate that there could have been survivors.

The Russians have passed to TFR some archival documents relative to the shootdown of this aircraft. Russian documents indicate that the RB-29 crashed in flames and that the only debris recovered was an empty life raft. The statement that the RB-29 crashed in flames seems to contradict the testimony of Robitaille and Owens who saw an intact RB-29. Hence, the case still remains unresolved.

FUTURE ACTIONS:

The next Plenum of the U.S.-Russia Joint Commission on POW/MIA Affairs is scheduled to begin on 6 December 1993 in Moscow. JCSB, together with TFR, is supporting the executive secretary in developing a plenum agenda, topics for working group discussions, a schedule of events, and providing suggestions for a Joint Commission visit to an appropriate location either within Russia or to a neighboring republic in order to develop additional POW/MIA conduits.

/s/

Norman D. Kass Executive Secretary U.S.-Russia Joint Commission on POW/MIAs

cc: Chief, DPMO-RA Chief, DPMO-RA-JCSB

October 4, 1993

MEMORANDUM FOR CHAIRMAN, U.S.-RUSSIA JOINT COMMISSION ON POW/MIAS (USRJC)

THROUGH: Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense, POW/MIA Affairs Director, Research and Analysis Division, DPMO Executive Secretary, USRJC

SUBJECT: Report on Significant Activities of the USRJC, 11 September through 8 October, 1993

SUMMARY: It has been a tumultuous time in Russia - President Yeltsin disbanded Parliament, then Vice President Alesandr Rutskoy, Parliamentary Speaker Ruslan Khasbulatov, and some conservative members of Parliament barricaded themselves in the White House, next the embattled Parliamentarians encouraged crowds to attack the Kremlin, and finally a bloody fight for the White House ensued. Yet, throughout all this turmoil Task Force Russia in Moscow has continued to function and to conduct interviews with Russian citizens. While many Americans sought refuge in the American Embassy, which was only a few blocks from the fighting, the members of Task Force Russia stayed in their hotel rooms and apartments throughout the street fighting. Fortunately, no one from TFR was injured in the fighting.

General Nikolai Sergeyevich Leonov, a retired KGB officer, was interviewed on 8 September 1993. He served in the KGB from 1958 to 1991. For much of that time he was abroad. At one time he was head of the Analytical Department for the External Affairs Sector. When asked if he had any knowledge of American POWs being taken from Vietnam to the Soviet Union, he replied that he could see no reason to bring POWs to the Soviet Union. Furthermore, this would have been a HUMINT issue and his department did not deal with such matters.

He is aware of only one study ever requested by the Politburo on Vietnam and that was a feasibility study of an American airborne operation to cut North Vietnam in two. This issue was looked at and the conclusion reached that it was both politically and militarily unfeasible for the United States.

For the period of 14-18 September 1993, members of Task Force Russia interviewed several individuals in the Ukraine. TFR renewed its contact with Mr. Dorofeyev, who is a prominent figure **in the Obelisk** Search Group. He assisted members of TFR in a visit to the War Museum in Kiev where there is some Vietnam era captured equipment which was photographed.

Mr. Dorofeyev also recounted the story of Irina Borisovna Alpatyeva who lives in Sevastopol'. Because her father is alleged to have knowledge of American POWs, one of Dorofeyev's friends tried to contact her in hopes that she could lead him to her father. However, shortly after he made contact with Irina

Alpatyeva, the friend was visited by the "special services" and told not to concern himself with the issue of American POWs. Subsequent attempts to meet with Alpatyeva were rebuffed.

In Kiev on 17 September 1993 members of Task Force Russia interviewed a retired Soviet Army colonel named Gregory Pavlovich Derskiy. In the course of the interview, which was held in Colonel Derskiy's apartment, the colonel related how, during the Korean War, he was ordered to send American POWs to the Soviet Union via China..

Just prior to the outbreak of the Korean War, Colonel Derskiy was assigned as an advisor to the North Korean 4th Infantry Division. During this period, GRU [Soviet Military Intelligence] headquarters ordered Soviet forces in Korea to obtain, at any cost, an intact F-84 aircraft and to immediately transport it to Moscow. Furthermore, there was a standing order that all F-84 pilots were to be sent to Moscow as well.

In April 1951 a F-84 which had run out of fuel crashed in a rice paddy in North Korea. Because there was no fuel on the aircraft, it did not burn and the aircraft was left largely intact. The pilot survived. Shortly afterwards a Soviet technology exploitation team arrived on the scene and took the aircraft away. Meanwhile Colonel Derskiy received the order to prepare the American pilot for transportation to China and then for further travel to the Soviet Union. The pilot was first sent to the city of Sen Goo Syun and then on to Moscow.

Colonel Derskiy said he was aware of about 18 to 20 American pilots who were processed for transportation to the Soviet Union. Two GRU officers, one with the code name "Pavlov" and the other with "Maximov", gave the orders to Derskiy to transport the American pilots to the Soviet Union.

On 17 September 1993, members of Task Force Russia interviewed Aleksandr Giorgievich Dmitriev. He is a Russian citizen who has taken a special interest in the fate of American POW/MIAs in Russia. Aleksandr Dmitriev has already conduct substantial research in Russian archives. While working in the Russian State Military Archive in Moscow, he found information that indicates, he argues, that the MVD's 22nd Independent Battalion [later renamed the 82nd Independent Battalion] was charged with escorting American POWs to the former Soviet Union during the Korean War.

Pointing to an order to the 22nd Independent Battalion dated 8 April 1952 that contains the phrase "be prepared for a special cargo", Dmitriev argues that this means strengthen the guard for a special cargo, i.e. POWs. When he tried to follow up information on the 22nd Independent Battalion, the archivist in the archives special reading room informed him that the material was closed to the public because it contained derogatory information of a personal nature. Meanwhile, Mr. Dmitriev informed task Force Russia that he intends to visit archives in Siberia and elsewhere in Russia in search of additional information on possible American POWs.

VIETNAM WORKING GROUP. Because we were not able to include in the last issue of the Triweekly the results of the Vietnam Working Group at the last Plenary Session of the Joint Commission, a summary of the working group's activities now follows.

The Vietnam Working Group of the U.S.-Russian Joint Commission on POW/MIAs met in Moscow on 1 September 1993. The U.S. side was chaired by Congressman William "Pete" Peterson (D-FL) while the Russian side was chaired by Vladimir Petrovich Kozlov, Deputy Director of the Russian Archives and Deputy Co-Chairman of the Russian side of the Joint Commission.

Vladimir Kozlov initiated the discussion by noting that since the establishment of the Joint Commission the Russian government has made a number of significant changes in its archival procedures and has instituted some new laws concerning access to archives. Classification authority for many secret documents including those dealing with POWs has been limited to thirty years. Some documents though have had the time period of their classification extended. External intelligence documents are classified for 50 years, nuclear related documents for 48 years, and criminal related ones for 30 years.

In an interesting admission, Mr. Kozlov said that "hypothetically" there should be a fifty percent chance that some American POWs were brought to the territory of the former Soviet Union. However, Mr. Kozlov stopped short of saying that such transfers took place. Rather, he argued that such transfer would have been so sensitive that they would have shown up in the papers of the Central Committee. Yet a search of the Central Committee archives for the period 1963-1985 does not reveal any evidence of such transfers The Russians did not limit their search to the Central Committee archives but extended their search to the archives of the Ministry of Defense, KGB, GRU, General Staff, Soviet Embassy in Hanoi, and other governmental agencies. But again, they could find no evidence.

Kozlov does not deny that there was interest in Soviet military circles in contacting American POWs in Vietnam. However, two factors prevented this contact. First, political concerns - the Soviets saw American POWs as a Vietnamese problem. Moreover, the Soviets feared that interference with U.S. POWs could have made efforts to contain the conflict more difficult. Secondly, the Vietnamese jealously guarded their access to American POWs. Although allies, the Vietnamese placed serious limitations on Soviet personnel and operations in Vietnam.

As regards to the 1205 Document uncovered by Stephen Morris in the Russian archives, Mr. Kozlov stated it was an authentic document from GRU files. He noted that it was unlikely the GRU, which understood the military, social, and political situation, would alter the text of the Vietnamese report. Kozlov also indicated that efforts to produce a Vietnamese text had proved unsuccessful. However, there were questions as to whether the information on the number of POWs the Vietnamese held was accurate. The Vietnamese, he stated, often exaggerated the numbers for propaganda purposes.

Vladimir Kozlov then noted that he would provide the U.S. side of the Joint Commission with another GRU document quoting a Vietnamese official's report on the 20th Party Plenum [Vietnam] in December 1970 - January 1971. This document, however indicates that there were 735 U.S. pilots in Vietnamese hands, that the Vietnamese had released the names of 368 captured pilots which they planed to release once U.S. soldiers agreed to leave Vietnam. Upon completion of the withdrawal, this document goes on to suggest, the remainder of American POWs would be released.

Mr. Kozlov then went on to discuss a proposal found in the Civil Aviation archives to transport 5,000 people from Hanoi to Paris via Tashkent and Moscow. The document indicated that a West German representative of **0st Tourist** visited Paris during the peace negotiations and offered to be a middle man. The KGB reportedly recommended coordinating the plan with the MFA and Vietnam but the scheme was rejected by the Politburo because there was no reason for the Soviet Union to participate.

Once Mr. Kozlov completed his briefing, Congressman William Peterson raised several questions with the Russians. First, Congressman Peterson asked Kozlov whether there had been any follow-up analysis prepared on the 1205 Document at the time it was received and if so what was the assessment of its credibility. The GRU representative Aleksandr Sivets replied that since the report was presented to the Politburo it was hard to believe that the document was a fabrication. Peterson went on to ask whether the Russians had found a Vietnamese language version of the 1205 Document. Kozlov replied that they had not found one and suggested that if it had ever existed it might have been destroyed by now.

Second, Congressman Peterson raised the issue of further meetings by TFR with Soviet diplomatic personnel. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs [MFA] representative replied that they had asked and tried to convince Soviet diplomats with experience in Indochina to meet with TFR but many were still unwilling.

Another issue raised by Congressman Peterson concerned reports of an American Vietnam era POW in Saryshagansk, Kazakhstan. Peterson related that a Russian journalist Yuri Pankov had written in **Kommersant** that an American "back-seater" who was shot down in Vietnam was taken to Alma Atta then on to Saryshagansk for intelligence exploitation. When American consular officials tried to gain access to the military base at Saryshagansk, they were denied access. Consequently, the United States still considers this an open case.

Mr. Kozlov replied that Saryshagansk is in Kazakhstan, an independent country now. He did offer,

however, to ask Kazakh archivists, who are due to visit Moscow in October, if they would check for any information on U.S. POWs.

Fourth, Congressman Kozlov asked about the possibility of U.S. researchers gaining access to the six volume GRU study on the U.S. military in Vietnam. The GRU representative, Aleksandr Sivets, denied the existence of the such a study insisting that this would not have been part of the GRU's mission. Then in a conciliatory manner Mr. Sivets asked Congressman Peterson from whom the U.S. got the information that such a six volume set existed. He went on to suggest that if they could find the source of this information, then perhaps they could find this alleged six volume set from which they would gladly extract any information on American POWs.

The Vietnam Working Group session concluded with several agreements. First, it was agreed that the Joint Commission's research is not completed. The Russian side next agreed to continue to search for additional POW information in the archives held by the security services and intelligence agencies. Furthermore, the Russians agreed to search the archives of the Committee of Solidarity and Help for African and Asian Countries, Aeroflot, the Air Force's supply and logistics components, Pacific Fleet, and the maritime authority to determine whether there is any information relating to U.S. POWs. Fourth, the Russians agreed to invite Yuri Pankov, the Russian journalist, to meet with the members of the Vietnam Working Group to review his information for the assertion that an American POW was taken to Saryshagansk.

The United States side agreed to provide the Russians with additional information on the six volume GRU study of U.S. forces in Vietnam. In addition, the U.S. expressed appreciation for the willingness of the Russian side to request the archivists from Kazakhstan to search their files for POW information. Finally, the U.S. side proposed that members of the Vietnam Working Group who serve in Moscow maintain a close working relationship with the Russian side to coordinate and support our efforts.

COLONEL JOHN W. DEPAUW, USA
CHIEF, JOINT COMMISSION SUPPORT BRANCH